

## REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,179 ("Matsuda"). More specifically, claims 1 and 7-11 are rejected as allegedly anticipated by Matsuda; and claims 2-6 are rejected as allegedly obvious in view of Matsuda. Applicants believe that the anticipation and obviousness rejections are improper for at least those reasons as discussed below.

With respect to the anticipation rejection, claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 are the sole independent claims. Claim 1 recites a virtual space system that has a chat function. The virtual space system includes a virtual space control device including a transmission object holding means for holding the latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter. The virtual space control device further includes a reception object holding means for holding the latest position information of a reception object and a reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object. The virtual space system as defined in claim 1 at least further includes a chat storage means for storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

Claim 9 recites a virtual space control device for controlling a virtual space that has a chat function. The virtual space control device at least includes a transmission object holding means and a reception object holding means wherein only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region are stored.

Claim 10 recites a control method of a virtual space that has a chat function. The controlled method includes holding the latest position information of a transmitter in the virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding the latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter and the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

Claim 11 recites an information providing medium for providing a program which causes a computer to execute functions including holding the latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding the latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

In contrast, Applicants believe that Matsuda is distinguishable from the claimed invention. For example, nowhere does Matsuda disclose or suggest the chat storage features as defined in independent claims 1 and 9 through 11. Contrary to the Patent Office's position (see, Office Action, pages 3 and 4), the chat windows in Figures 34-39 of Matsuda are not for storing only contents of a chat issued from a transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region as required by the claimed invention. As further supported in the specification, the virtual space system 1 includes a server 2 as a virtual space control device for controlling a virtual space, an application object server 3 as a reception object control device for preparing and controlling a reception object, a chat storage file 4 as a chat storage means for storing the contents of a chat issued from a transmitter, a network 5 as an electric communication means with which a number of users connect, and clients 6a, 6b and 6c as users for operating the transmitters in the virtual space. See, Specification, page 7, lines 14-22; and Fig. 1. Indeed, the Figures 34-39 of Matsuda merely provide examples of clients establishing a private chat between two clients in a three-dimensional virtual environment that includes multiple users. Clearly, this fails to disclose or suggest the chat storage features as claimed and moreover, Applicants believe that the remaining portions of Matsuda are deficient with respect to the chat storage features as well.

With respect to the rejection of claims 2-6, these claims each depend from independent claim 1. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above, Applicants believe that Matsuda is distinguishable from the claimed invention as defined by claims 2-6.

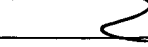
Based on at least these reasons, Applicants believe that Matsuda fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants believe that Matsuda fails to anticipate or render obvious the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the anticipation and obviousness rejections be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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